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VOL. I, No. 4, pp. 143-179

AUGUST, 1929

PUBLICATIONS
OF THE
CATHOLIC ANTHROPOLOGICAL
CONFERENCE



THE BAHANGA

BY
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CATHOLIC ANTHROPOLOGICAL CONFERENCE
WASHINGTON, D. C., U. S. A.

1929

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CATHOLIC ANTHROPOLOGICAL CONFERENCE

THE BAHANGA

By N. STAM

Mill Hill Society, Mumias, Kavirondo, East Africa

The Bahanga or Wanga are a Bantu tribe inhabiting a stretch of country in East Africa between Mount Elgon and Victoria Lake (see map). The present chief, Mumia, was the man met by the early explorers, and the first fort and later on the Government station were called after him, Mumias. This place lay on the old caravan route from Mombasa to Uganda.

TRIBAL HISTORY

The ancestor of the Bahanga was a certain Kwandedi, born in the Teriki country. This man went to Khyira in Kabras near the Nandi border. He had two sons, Wanga and Khabiagala. For some reason or other these two brothers settled in Bwagwe (Kabras), their kraals being close to each other, but they and their followers quarreled. The story of their quarrel is differently narrated by different people. Wanga being of a peaceful nature, left during the night. People thought that a leopard had killed him, because he left all his women and cattle behind. He left, however, for Imanga hill, south of the Lusumu river not far from the present Mumias. This hill was occupied by a petty chief of Maragoli origin, named Muyima.

Wanga arrived there as a stranger and pretended to have a lame arm which he kept covered with the large skin he wore. He did this in order to hide the thick copper bracelet which only chiefs in this country wear. Muyima accepted him in his kraal and gave him food for the work he did. Muyima did not trust him herding his cattle on account of his so-called lame arm, but gave him minor jobs, as, for instance, sweeping the kraal. After some time he was watched by one of the women of Muyima. She had boiled his food and put it down in the hut which was allotted to Wanga. Wanga, unaware that he was being spied on by the woman, started washing his hands before eating. The woman noticed the copper bracelet immediately, and as soon as Muyima came home from his beer party she told him what she had seen. Wanga on being called told him the whole story of his quarrel with his brother and how

he had left his people secretly during the night. This strange story was soon told all over the country and reached Kabras.

The Bakhero, the Banamagwa, and the Bakhyikawa, clans inhabiting Kabras, which were devoted to him, soon came to see their old chief. They were determined not to leave him, so they came over with all their people and cattle and settled in Bijifi, not far from Imanga. The valley between Imanga hill and the Lusumu river proved to be too small for their numerous followers and they made up their minds to cross the river and occupy the country inhabited by the Bamakambo. They were successful in their attack and Wanga built his stronghold in the place called Mumias. Gradually the Bamakambo left the whole country and turned on the Maragoli people who inhabited the Malama country. This gave Wanga a free hand and he crossed the Nzoya river and occupied Matungo hill, where he built a second fort. He died there and was buried in his hut. This spot is considered a sacred place and all the chiefs of the Wanga clan are buried there.

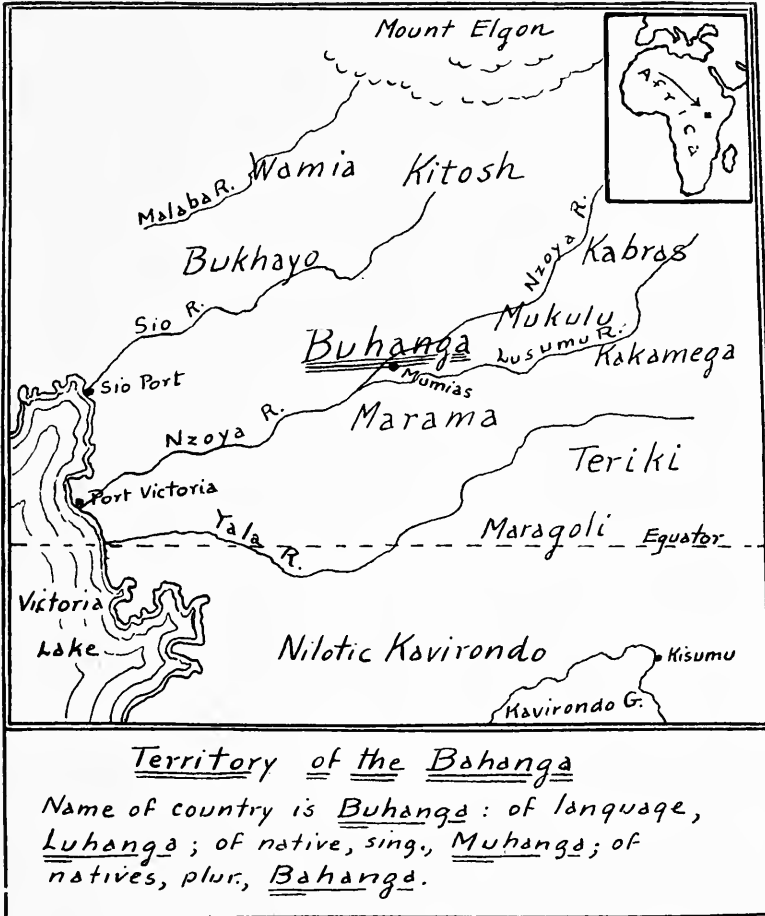
Wanga had four sons living at the time of his death, and Waballa had been appointed by him as his successor. Waballa was of a less warlike nature than his father and had his mind on women and cattle. This necessitated him multiplying his kraals, but he considered Mumias as his principal residence.

People considered Waballa as a cattle expert and his fame spread even outside his own country into Bukhayo where the people possessed large herds of long-horned cattle. Many of these cattle were unmanageable, but Waballa knew how to treat them and contrived to saw the sharp tips off their horns. On account of his skill he acquired large wealth, to the great annoyance of his brother, Muroho, who was anxious to do away with him. Muroho went secretly to the people of the Bukhayo country and told them that his brother was a fraud, and that he had an eye on their cattle. This took with these people and when Waballa came there, he was murdered. Immediately Muroho declared himself chief.

The dying Waballa, seeing the duplicity of his brother, Muroho, was determined that the chieftainship should not pass to the clan of Muroho. Waballa had, however, no male offspring, but he called Wakhalivu, the head of the Bakhero family, who had the privilege of nominating the chief by giving him the copper bracelet worn by the chief. Waballa took the bracelet off his arm and told Wakhalivu to go to Matawa, four miles from Mumias, where one of Waballa's wives was near childbirth. Waballa informed him that if his wife brought forth a male child the child

should be called by the name of Muswi (a name of a girl who has not brought forth).

The boy was born, and his uncle, Muroño, thought that Waballa's offspring was a girl, and so did not kill the child. By order of Waballa



four arrows were put in the hands of the boy to be used in case his uncle should make an attempt to kill him. Muroño tried to get the chief's bracelet out of Wakhalivu but did not succeed. Muroño did not trust the child in Matawa, because some rumors had reached him that the child was a boy and not a girl, and this explained the attitude of Wak-

halivu. Muroño made up his mind and attacked the kraal in Matawa. Muswi, although a little boy, made use of the four arrows Wakhalivu had given him and he killed the four followers of Muroño. Everybody in the neighborhood was astonished at this feat, which they ascribed to the spirit of Waballa, his father. They immediately took to arms, defeated the attacking army, and managed to drive their leader, Muroño, across the Nzoya river to a place called Marakalu near Ndangalasya, southwest of Mumias.

Muswi was proclaimed chief of Buhanga, but his uncle Muroño remained master of the strip of land across the river. Muroño did not enjoy his little chieftainship for long because he died soon afterwards. His son, Kitai, succeeded him, but robbed his people too much, with the result that they left him and joined Muswi. Peace reigned in the time of Muswi till his death when he was succeeded by his son Wamukoya. As Wamukoya had no living brother, he remained unmolested.

When he was getting old, his two sons, Netya and Kweyu, began to quarrel because the time was near when one of the two had to succeed their father. Both were powerful in the land and the sympathies of the people were fairly equally divided. It was not long before a terrific battle was fought by the two brothers, in which the whole country took part. There were heavy casualties on both sides, but Kweyu's people came off second best and had to retire to Khyimuli, northeast of Mumias, where they settled down with their chief and made no further attempt to dislodge Netya from Mumias, because Kweyu was attacked from the east by the Abekwe and the Abarebe.

Netya on his side was not in a position to trouble himself about his brother, because he had his hands full with the Abetakho from Kakamega, and the Babukusu from Kitosh. All during his life he had to fight because the Wamia attacked him as did also the Nilotic Kavirondo. Under his rule a colony of Uasin-Gishu Masai settled in his country. He was unable to fight these daring and warlike Masai. Therefore he had recourse to strategy. He prepared a big feast and invited the Masai to come and enjoy his hospitality. This deceit succeeded only in part. Most of the Masai who had accepted his invitation were killed during the festivities. But when the news of the foul treachery reached the Masai colony, they went out to take revenge and besieged Netya's kraal in Mumias. The kraal was taken by the Masai who murdered everyone on whom they could lay their hands. Netya himself managed to escape, but the Masai followed him and killed him in Lwanda. After their victory, they called the Bahanga together and told them that they had not

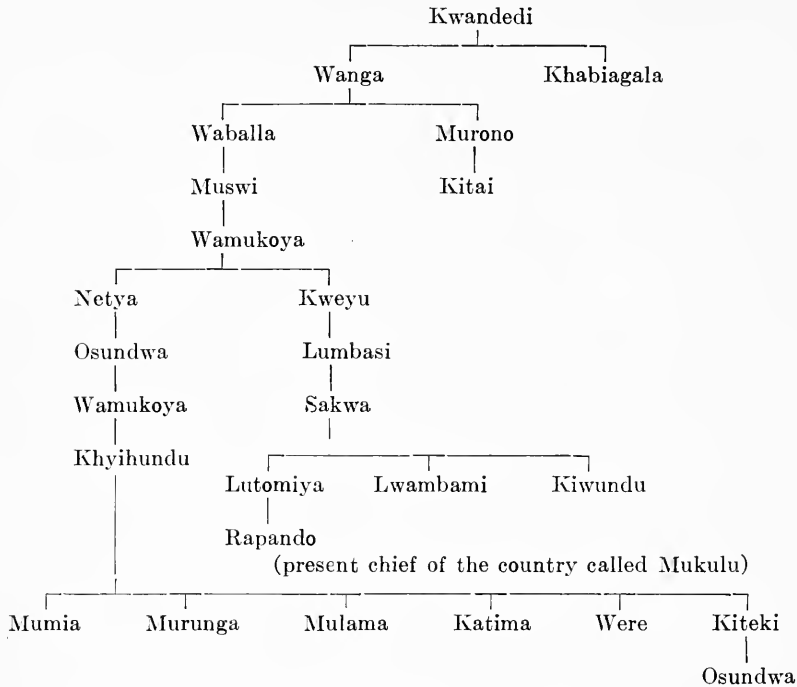
the least intention of taking their country from them, but that they would not suffer themselves to be interfered with, and they expressed the wish that Osundwa, the son of Netya, be proclaimed chief.

Osundwa had a hard time of it. All his reign was a struggle for life, because all the surrounding tribes made heavy raids on his people, so much so that the Bahanga lost courage. But Osundwa with his motto, "death or victory," made them rally a bit. When Osundwa died his son Wamukoya took the reins. He had no peace but had to fight against fearful odds, because more than once different tribes invaded his country at the same time. All these wars brought famine in the land and no woman could go to the well to fetch water without an escort of warriors. At the time of his death, when Khyihundu, his son, took the chieftainship, the Bahanga were in a bad plight. The constant raids had diminished their cattle, and besides they had to pay a yearly tribute of cattle to the colony of the Masai who had promised to help them in their struggle for life.

At last a caravan of Swahili, armed with rifles and ammunition, came from the coast and promised to stay in Mumias and help them against the surrounding tribes. This help was effective, because the natives here did not know the use of firearms. In this way Khyihundu had an easy old age and was succeeded by his son Mumia. When Mumia was about twenty years of age, Thomson, the first European, passed through. The Mombasa-Uganda route was established by the East India Company and passed Mumias. The caravans from the coast had to be protected, and at different points garrisons, manned with Sudanese, were established. In this way one was built in Mumias next to the kraal of the chief Mumia. The government overrated Mumia's power and thought him to be the paramount chief of practically the whole of the Elgon district and unknowingly the Government made Mumia's clan (the Bakhitsetse family) what they are now, by proclaiming Mumia paramount chief; by making Mulama his brother, chief of Marama; his brother Katima, chief of Samia; his brother Murunga, chief of North Kitosh and Wamia; his brother Were, chief of Wahola.

It is true that Mumia's influence is great. This, however, is not so much because of his chieftainship, but rather because of his reputation as a priest and rainmaker. He has his two principal kraals in Mumias and in Jinja, and has about seventy children, most of them being Catholic. He is a very talkative old man, with a strong dislike for Dr. Carl Peters, who on his famous journey to Uganda threatened to kill him if he did not produce food for his porters. Last year Mumia retired,

and Osundwa, the son of Mumia's brother, Kiteki, has taken his place as chief, although in the eyes of the people Mumia is and will remain their *mwami* till he dies.



DEATH AND BURIAL OF A CHIEF

Because special rites are observed in the case of the death of a chief, I shall treat this separately.

The chief of the Bahanga belongs to the Bakhitsetse family. When the chief lies ill beyond recovery, the head of the Bakhiero clan is called in. (Wakhalivu, mentioned in the history above, was the first head of this clan.) If he decides that recovery is impossible, he fetches some more elders of his clan and the chief is strangled by them. As soon as this is done, they leave the hut and announce the death of the chief. The inhabitants of the kraal and all the people who came to inquire about their ill chief then start wailing and continue for a short while, to let the country know that the chief has died.

The Bakhiero elders order a bull to be killed, the meat of which is not sacrificed but is eaten by the people in the kraal. The fresh hide of the

animal is taken to the hut where the dead chief is lying, a hole is dug in the middle of the hut, and the hide is put in. The dead chief's body is stripped of all it has on, even the copper bracelet being taken off. Then the body is let down in a sitting posture, a beer-sucker is put in his mouth, and the eyes kept open by fixing two pieces of reedgrass under the eyelids. Then the grave is filled up with soil in such a way that the head remains above ground. A beerpot is fetched, of which the bottom is neatly broken off, and this is put over his head with the rim of the pot resting on his shoulders. All leave the hut except the first wife of the chief, who remains there till the head decays. Then the broken-off bottom of the beerpot is fetched, and the head is pressed down and covered with the remains of the pot. Nobody seems to care afterwards about the dead chief. They allow the hut to decay and fall down over the grave.

The dead chief's son, the successor, prepares a huge feast to which the whole countryside is invited. This feast may take place one or two years after the death of the old chief. There is no fixed period, because all depends on whether the son thinks he is able to provide food and drink enough for all. When everything is ready, the people come to "fix the grave of the chief" (*okhusenera ekhyirindwa ekhyo mwami*).

The feast is opened by a sacrifice. A bull is brought into the middle of the kraal. The Bakhyero elders hand a spear to the successor of the chief, who solemnly spears the bull. The meat is cut up into pieces and thrown into the air, while the chief's name is mentioned. Similar pieces are thrown to the various deceased members of the Bakhitsetse clan, and the blood of the bull is poured out on the sacrificial stones. More animals are killed for the consumption of the mourners.

Then they begin to dig up the bones of the old chief. These are washed clean with water, polished with butter, and put into a beerpot. The procession starts, headed by the reigning chief, and the remains of the old man are carried to Matungo, where the first chief Wanga died and had his sacrificial tree and stones. A little hole is dug, and the beerpot is fixed above ground, in a shallow hole to prevent it from falling over. The pot is left uncovered under the sacred trees.

BURIAL RITES OF THE COMMON PEOPLE

When the owner of the kraal dies (death = *okhufwa*), grain, millet, flax seed or any other seed the man has in his kraal, is spread loosely in small quantities over the body as a symbol that all the stores are his and remain his. Before the burial (*okhuyaberwa*) the grain is swept

outside the hut. A big grave (*ekhyirindwa*) is dug in the middle of the hut. The corpse is put in naked with the knees bent almost to the chin and the body resting on the right side. Where the deceased is a woman, she is buried just outside the hut to the left hand side of the entrance. A male child is buried outside the hut on the right hand side under the eaves, a female child on the left hand side under the eaves. The woman is buried on her left side, and the female child also (fig. 1).

An unpierced leaf of the bark-cloth tree is put under the right ear, on which he is lying. On his left ear a similar leaf is put, in order to prevent sand from entering. On the top of this leaf a pierced leaf is spread, in

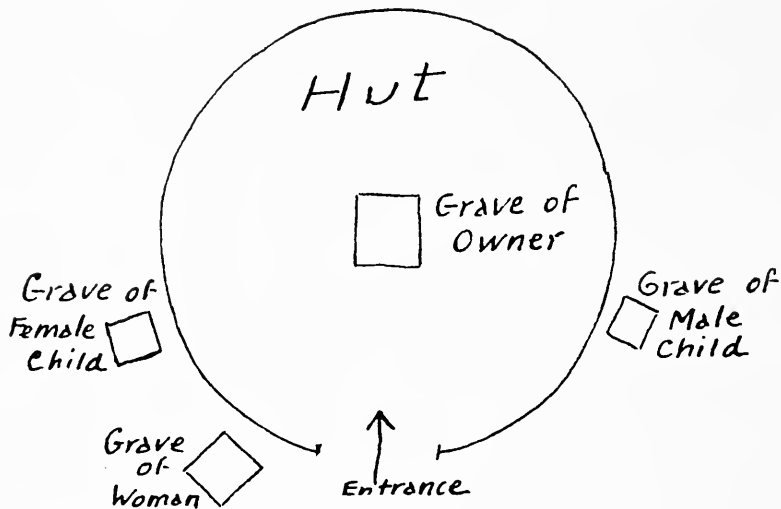


FIG. 1. GROUND PLAN: HUT AND GRAVES

order that he may hear every thing which is said about him and also that at the sacrifice time he may hear his name mentioned when his share of the sacrifice is thrown in the open. From this wild fig tree bark cloth is made; therefore the leaves of this tree are considered as his clothing in the underworld.

When the corpse is lying in the grave, they shave part of the dead man's hair on the right hand side bordering on the forehead. In the case of a woman, part of her hair on the left hand side is shaven. A child's head is shaven (a little patch) in the middle nearest the forehead. This is done in order that the defunct may be recognized in the underworld as being a man or woman or child. As soon as the shaving is over, the

grave hole is filled. They take the hide which was used by the dead person as a sleeping hide, and go to the river to wash it and to wash themselves. This is done to prevent spreading of the sickness of which the person died.

They then return to the kraal, swing the hide on the grave as if in a hurry, and proceed to the entrance of the hut, where the person has died. They all stand in a line whilst a chicken is fetched. The chicken is rubbed over the chest of all the persons standing in the row, is killed by banging the head on a stone, and is put on the fire, just as it is, without being plucked. This burial chicken (*inkokho eyo mukulikho*) is eaten by all who have taken part in the burial and is consumed outside the hut at the doorway.

Then the great bewailing (*okhuba khu maziga*) starts. At the moment of the person's death, the bewailing was of short duration. The second day is spent by all the relatives and neighbors in howling, as is also part of the third day when all shave their heads as a token of sympathy. In case the dead person is a woman, they shave the second day. On the fourth day the principal bull of the deceased owner is killed without sacrifice. As the bull has been responsible for the offspring of the cows in the kraal, he ought to be killed, now that the owner is dead.

After the meal all the huts and the compound are swept, and the relatives go home.

Later on, the sons-in-law come with their wives, bring a goat or a chicken which they kill near the hut where the grave is, and have a meal prepared without sacrifice, which is called "to return the bones" (*okhukalusya evigumba*). As they have partaken of the meal when the bull belonging to the dead person was killed on the fourth day, therefore they have to show their gratitude by preparing in return this meal in his honor. When they go "to return the bones," they are supposed not to greet anybody on the road or to look back. Also when they are returning from the ceremony, this is not done, because, if they speak to or look at anybody, they might cause him to die of the same illness of which the dead person in question died.

A year or so after, the eldest son of the dead person prepares a huge feast with sacrifices in the usual way by pouring beer on the two sacrificial stones and throwing pieces of meat to the dead. After the meal they dance (burial dance = *omuyima*) in honor of the dead person, which ceremony is considered as the winding up of the burial rites and is called 'to fasten the grave' (*okhusenera ekhyirindwa*).

When the inhabitants of the kraal are bothered by nightmare, which

happens often, they ascribe it to the evil tendencies of the dead person. They consult together, and when they unanimously agree that the spirit the dead is trying to choke them during their sleep, they dig up the grave. If they find the body not totally decomposed, they decide that their suspicions are well-grounded. The remains are therefore taken to the river bank and burned to ashes and the ashes are thrown in the water. As soon as this is done, they yell and run away as fast as possible.

SACRIFICES

There are no special priests. The owner of each kraal is also the sacrificer (*omumali owe misango*) in that kraal. On big occasions, as, for instance, circumcision, the chief offers the sacrifice. Before they start sowing, the principal wife in the kraal offers a sacrifice. In the language of the Bahanga, sacrifice is *omusango*; to sacrifice, *okhumala omusango*.

In each kraal two sacrificial stones, on either side of a small Lusiola stick four feet long, are put in front of the hut inhabited by the first wife at a distance of ten feet in a radial line from the entrance (fig. 2).

These sacrificial stones are called the stones of the ancestors and are smooth. The principal stone, on the right hand side, is one foot broad and sticks one foot and a half above ground, and is buried half a foot in the soil. The second stone is not more than four or five inches in width and height, at least that part which is sticking above the ground. The native term for these two stones is *amagina ake misambwa*, which means nowadays "stones of the spirits," but originally the now obsolete verb "*samba*," to build or erect, must have entered into the expression.

The sacred pole or stick is taken from the sacred tree or rather grove, which is called the *khyembekho*, i.e., belonging to the family. The early ancestors planted Lusiola trees in their kraal. The Lusiola tree is the *Markhamia platycalyx* of the Bignoniaceae family. It can reach a height of forty feet, and is very strong timber. This tree and the wild fig are the most common trees in the country, and also the most useful, for the Lusiola supplies all building material, hoe-handles, and spear shafts, while the fig tree supplies wood for chairs and other things. The natives cut a straight branch out of the sacred grove, about four feet long, strip it of all its leaves and side branches, take it to their kraal, and fix it between the two sacrificial stones. In case the stick dries up and is tackled by the white ant, they fetch another from the sacred grove. Both the sacred fig tree and the sacred cluster or grove of Lusiola trees are called *khyembekho* (sing.). The sacred pole or stick is called *lusambwa*, but often the *lusambwa* is simply called by its common name *lusiola*.

Lusambwa appears to mean "(the tree) which is erected," from the above-mentioned verb *samba*. The verb as such is no longer in use, but verbs

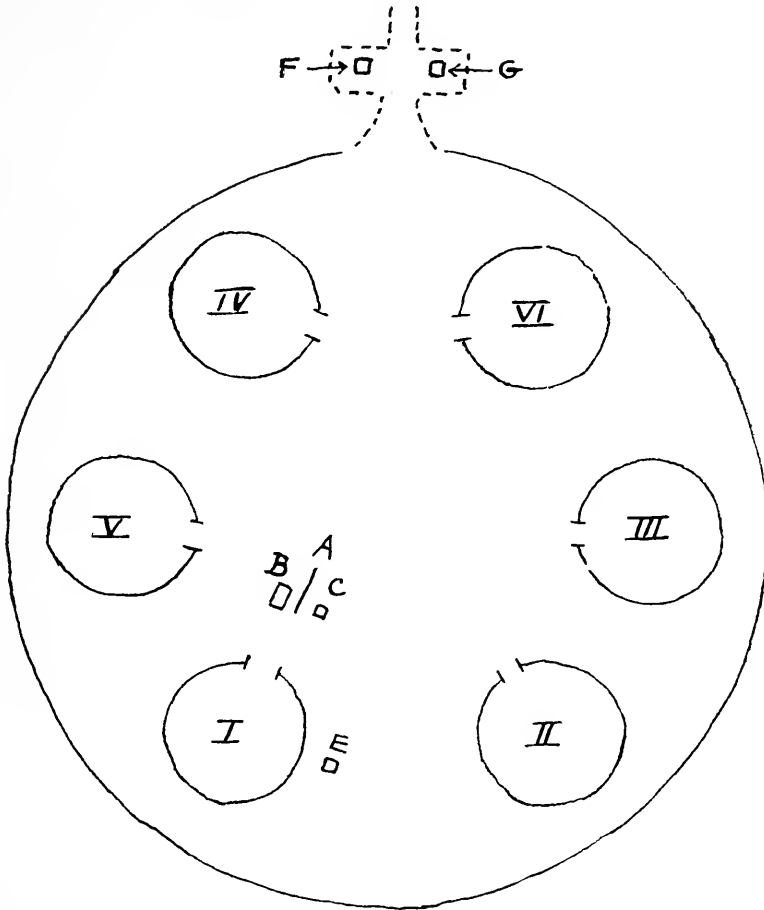


FIG. 2. GROUND PLAN: KRAAL

I = hut of first wife; II-V = huts of other wives; VI = boys' hut, *isimba*; A = sacred pole; B, C, big and small sacrificial stones; E = sacrificial stone of first wife; F, G, two stones dedicated to God.

derived from it still exist, as, for instance, *sambula*, to break down. A verb with opposite meaning can always be formed by changing final *-a* into *-ula*.

Besides the above two sacrificial stones, there is another small stone erected alongside the hut of the principal wife, to the left. The woman builds a miniature hut over it. When the owner of the kraal dies, his eldest son inherits the stone which is alongside his mother's hut and also the big stone in front of the hut. The second son has the right to the small stone in front of the hut. The eldest son is as a rule a son by the father's first or principal wife, while the second son is usually by another wife. All the other sons select their sacrificial stones in the river bed as soon as they start family life of their own. Thus, the sacrificial stones of the direct descendants are of great antiquity.

Outside the kraal, on both sides of the path leading to the kraal entrance, two other flat stones are erected. These stones are called "the stones on the pathway" (*amagina ako lunganyi*) and are dedicated to God (*Nasayi* or *Were*).

The usual sacrifice is a chicken, but on big occasions a cow or a goat may be killed. Food is also sacrificed, and the native beer is poured out as a libation. When the principal wife sacrifices, she kills a female quail and sacrifices some food.

ORDINARY SACRIFICES

The times of sacrifice are as a rule the time of sowing, the time of sickness, and or on the occasion of a death in the kraal. In harvest time the chief himself may offer a big sacrifice. The chief also sacrifices every four years when circumcision time comes round.

The private sacrifices take place in the kraal whilst only the inmates are present. The owner of the kraal takes a chicken by the legs and kills it by banging its head on the big sacrificial stones. The blood is allowed to drop on both stones and at the base of the sacrificial pole. Then he proceeds to the small sacrificial hut (*khatsu khe misango*) of his first wife and allows some blood to drop there. After that he goes outside the kraal to the two stones of God and does the same. In the meantime the first wife puts a little pot of beer at the foot of the sacrificial pole.

The owner then plucks the chicken, kindles a fire in front of the pole, and roasts the chicken. As soon as the chicken is ready, he brings his beersucker and drops some beer first on the stones and then at the foot of the pole. Then he goes over to the sacrificial hut and allows some beer to drop there. Then he goes to the stones of God outside the kraal and does the same.

Whilst he is pouring his libation, the first wife brings a plate with boiled

grain, their staple food. The husband tears off tiny pieces of meat of the roasted chicken, puts them on the edge of the plate, and makes some small balls of the porridge. The meat is kneaded into the balls and thrown in the open whilst he says: *abakuku mulire omu* (grandfathers, eat here); a second piece is thrown, whilst he says: *evinambwa mulire omu* (great-grandfathers, eat here); a third piece is thrown whilst he says: *evisoni mulire omu* (great-great-grandfathers, eat here). A fourth and a fifth piece are then brought to the sacrificial hut of the wife. He again rises and throws a piece to the east and to the west, whilst he utters a curse on his enemies: "may my enemy fall with the sun," i.e., may he die before the sun has finished his course. He goes outside the kraal and puts two little balls on the stones of God and prays: "God help us that we may receive the good things; may my enemy die before the sun sets."

The sacrifice being over, they all sit down before the sacrificial pole in the kraal and partake of the sacrificial meal and the beer. After that their friends and neighbors come and all proceed to the hut of the first wife and partake of a meal prepared for them.

At the time of sowing, the principal wife offers her official sacrifice. All the women of the kraal are called and also the female children. She brings a basket with the seed to be sown and puts it in front of the sacrificial hut; she fetches boiled food which also she deposits there. A female quail is killed by her and the blood is poured out on the stone in the little hut. She then roasts her quail and mixes small pieces of it with the boiled food which she lays inside the hut on the sacrificial stone, and prays to her dead relatives: "My deceased relatives, be gracious to me, that the seed which I am going to sow may thrive in the field." After that they all partake of the food and of the remnants of the quail.

When her child is lying ill, she may ask the intercession of her dead relatives by putting food in the sacrificial hut.

The owner of the kraal looks after the two stones on the pathway. In the morning he sweeps round the two stones of God and thinks of his dead forefathers while he says: "My dead relatives, sit here near these stones." When he goes abroad, these spirits wait for him outside the kraal and accompany him on his journey that no evil may befall him.

If sickness occurs in the kraal, he may go to the witchdoctor for medicine to be put on the body of the sick person or under his head, but the witchdoctor may also prescribe a sacrifice of a white chicken. The father puts this chicken at night under a basket near the stones of God; a stone is put on the inverted basket in order to keep the chicken from escaping. If a wild animal takes the chicken, the child will die; if not,

the child will recover because the chicken was accepted by God. This chicken remains sacred and is not allowed to be killed. If, however, it dies of old age, they do not scruple to eat it.

Some people are, of course, more devout than others. Thus, while some men leave it to the women to get the blessing on their crop, others do their own share. At sowing or harvesting time a man will take a white chicken which he sacrifices to God outside at the stones on the pathway. He plucks the chicken on the one stone and roasts it on the other. A piece of the chicken is placed on each stone, two feathers are stuck in the ground next to both the stones, and he takes the rest of the chicken to his hut and eats it. Again, all the people hold fast to their faith in God and in the protection of their forefathers. If the owner of the kraal is a rich man he will sacrifice often and his sacrifice will consist of a cow; if the owner is poor, he will sacrifice less often and his sacrifices will consist of chickens. Regarding, however, the sacrifices ordered by the charm-doctor or oracle man, these are often not carried out. Some scepticism may prevail, because several people have been taken in by charm-doctors and oracle men who have been discovered in deception, speaking to a client, for instance, about his mother as if she were dead whereas she was still alive, or making other statements known by clients to be untrue.

Part of a sacrifice is always kept. The horns of the animal are put on the roof of the hut of the principal woman; small strips of the hide are worn round the wrists; the beak of the bird or some feathers are tied to a piece of string round the wearer's neck.

In some cases the owner of a kraal will select a bull which he wants sacrificed at the time of his death. The ears are cut off entirely as a mark that the animal is sacred. When the man dies, this bull is tied to a pole in the middle of the kraal till it passes water. If it does not do so, the sacrifice is considered as not acceptable.

Sacrificial beer is called *amalwa ake misango*; a sacrificial cow, *ingombe eye misango*; a sacrificial chicken, *inkokho eye misango*; a sacrificial quail, *isindu eye misango*.

SPECIAL SACRIFICES

A husband quarrels with his wife, loses his temper, takes up a stick, and strikes her badly on the head. She runs away and takes refuge in the hut of somebody else. This man sees the skull fracture, goes to see her husband, and tells him that the thing is serious: "A woman with a fracture of the skull running to my house means death to me or to my

wife or to my children, therefore the only thing for you to do is to sacrifice a goat." The goat is brought, and taken by the four legs, and the head is banged on the ground all around the hut where the woman took refuge. The dung is taken out of the goat after the goat has been killed in this way, and is smeared on the chests of the members of both families, children as well. A piece of the skin is put around the wrist of both women and also of the children, whilst the men cover their thumbs with a piece of the skin. These pieces of skin may be removed and thrown away after two days. Then the goat is split in two and each family takes a half. This is sufficient and the whole affair is considered finished.

This special sacrifice of a goat (*okhutisa imbusi*) with all the ceremonies as described above takes place on more than one occasion. The husband beats his wife, she tries to defend herself but gets the worst of it, loses her clothes in the struggle, and runs for help into the house of somebody else. The owner does not intend to give his assistance, but waits for the husband and tells him to sacrifice a goat, otherwise this is going to bring sickness to his family.

A goat sacrifice is also required in the following case. A woman goes to the well, fills her waterpot, puts it on her head and whilst passing the hut of somebody else, the waterpot breaks and the water is spilled. This is considered a bad omen, and will certainly bring sickness to the house. She is immediately told to inform her husband so that he may sacrifice a goat, as was done in the case of the skull fracture and the running into the house without clothes.

Then there is the case of the salt filter. The Bahanga make their salt out of the grass. The grass is dried and burnt. The ashes are put in an earthenware vessel of the shape of a deep basin. In the bottom of the vessel is a very small hole. This salt filter is put on the top of a bigger receptacle, water is poured into it, and the saline material trickles down while the ashes remain in the filter. Now it may happen that two huts are adjoining and that one of the women is busy with her salt filtering while she stands outside with the filter in her hand. She is in conversation with her neighbor who tells her all the scandals of the neighborhood, how so and so is suspected of having bewitched the child of so and so. The woman with her salt filter forgets all about what she is doing, enters the hut of her talkative friend, puts the filter down and the salty water trickles onto the floor before they are aware of it. This is serious. "You better tell your husband to sacrifice a goat before sickness enters my house." And the poor husband of the neglectful woman has to go through the performance described above.

Another case is that of the crying baby, who refuses to keep quiet. A baby is born and gets his or her name on the day of its birth. But the baby is troublesome; for two days at a stretch night and day it keeps on crying no matter what the mother does. Husband and wife declare this peculiar and begin to suspect that their baby is not satisfied with the name it got. For safety's sake the father goes to the oracle man and explains his difficulty. The answer is that there is no mistake about it, "if it is a girl, we will have to give it the name of your mother-in-law and if it is a boy he will be called after your father-in-law. I know this is not allowed according to our customs, but it is the only remedy to keep your child quiet." Both proceed to the house. The oracle man wants a white chicken, a cock if the baby is a boy, a hen if the baby is a girl. The oracle man takes the chicken, holds it against the middle pole of the hut, plucks out a feather from each wing, and sticks these feathers in the ground at the two sides of the chicken, while he utters his oracles, because the spirit of the father-in-law or mother-in-law has to enter the fowl. After this the chicken is let go and is not allowed to be killed. This chicken is called *inkokho eyakulikhirwamwo*.

THE SACRED TREE AND RAINMAKING

Every chief in this country has a sacred tree somewhere in his province. This tree, is something distinct from the sacred grove. It is always a good specimen of the wild fig tree, a bark-cloth tree (*Artocarpus*). This sacred tree is the tree of God and nobody is allowed to gather firewood from it. The most famous of these sacred trees is in Matungo where the bones of all the chiefs rest.

Each chief is supposed to be able to bring rain. In time of drought his people will beseech him to bring rain and their petitions are always accompanied by presents, very often cattle, when rain is badly wanted. After a good number of people have come to him, the chief will go to the sacred tree (*khyembekho*), taking a boy with him who carries a cooking-pot partly filled with water. The chief orders the boy to put the pot down under the tree and then opens his little parcel containing the charm which is supposed to do the miracle. Of course, only the chief knows the secret of it. He pours it into the pot, orders the boy to start the pot boiling, and sits down near it. As soon as he notices that the water reaches the boiling point, he hands the boy a hollow reed and orders him to put the reed in the pot and to blow. The stuff put into the water by the chief gives the water a milky color, and, when the boy blows, a froth appears which is similar to soap suds. The froth will rise and sink; if it

runs over onto the ground, the miracle is supposed to have worked, and rain will come; but if the froth does not overflow, the drought will continue. Dissatisfied the man goes home and will try again the next day. In the meantime more presents come in from his people, because they think that the chief is unwilling. If it takes too long before the overflow occurs, the chief will stay at home and send the boy alone. In this way people might go to another chief and try to get him to produce the rain. Mumia, the chief of Buhanga here, is renowned all over the country as an effective rainmaker and people from all over the land come to him.

What he himself thinks of his powers, I do not know, but at the time of the big drought he complained to me and asked me to bring the longed-for rain, saying to me: "Beseech God because my endeavors have been in vain."

RELIGIOUS CONCEPTIONS OF THE BAHANGA

God is called *Nasayi* ("the one adored" from the verb, *sayo*, to adore). In some cases they call Him *Were*. This name is often given to boys as well as to girls, but up to the present I have been unable to find out the meaning of the word.

God is known to them as a spirit who never possessed a body. He is the creator of heaven and earth, of the sun, moon and stars, and of everything on earth. He gives life to every human being and animal. He has created everything for the benefit of man. He is good and does not bring evil on earth. When a native is asked where he supposes God to be, he will answer that he does not know exactly but somewhere in the open. He never gives a thought to His omnipresence, but he will admit that God gives life to all things all over the world; each child is conceived in the womb through His will; each calf born is born through His working.

It is true that the natives give more thought to their ancestors than to God, because God is good and will not bring sickness to them, while their dead ancestors may if they see themselves neglected. Everything evil is ascribed to the dead. There are bad ones amongst these spirits just as among the living on earth. On earth the natives have many enemies, especially people of other clans than their own, who will do them harm if they can. Therefore in the world beyond the same attitude is kept up. They thoroughly believe in the evil eye; people on earth can bewitch them and cause their death. The same power is ascribed to the departed and even in a higher degree.

The spirits of the other world are called devils (*vikhyeno*). All disturbances in the elements, such as earthquakes and lightning, are caused by them. The native in his sacrifices does not try to appease the spirit of those who did not belong to his clan, but tries to please only those of his own family, that they may protect him against those spirits who bear him ill feeling. The deceased former owners of the kraal protected him when they were living and will continue to do so now. The son has erected the stones outside the kraal. These stones are put there as an altar to God, but the son will sweep daily around them so that his forefathers may sit there and watch the kraal from on the path leading up to it and also accompany him when he leaves. This is done to protect him and the inhabitants of the kraal against their enemies from without, and especially against those people who are possessed of the devil and who walk at night and try to enter the kraal in order to put their charms on the sleeping. The stones inside the kraal are dedicated to the dead, because sickness is feared and it is the business of the forefathers to ward it off.

Thus at first sight the Bahanga seem to be ancestor worshippers. In reality, however, they adore the one God, the creator and lifegiver. If sickness breaks out and continues, the native dedicates a white chicken to God. In time of sowing and harvesting, he sacrifices a white chicken to God, because he is convinced that all life and all fertility proceed from God alone.

In the morning the woman takes her baby out and spits towards the sun and tries to spit towards the west and asks God to protect her child that day. It is true that in some cases the woman asks the sun (*liyuba*), but in most cases God is directly invoked. The sun is the symbol of God, because light proceeds from the sun. Sunlight cures the sick and the heat of the sun makes the seeds grow in the field. The sun has been created by God to do this work. Therefore some pray to the sun directly, but in most cases they address *Were* or *Nasayi* (God) Himself.

A man coming back from a long journey ascribes his safe return to God: "*Were ankhonyere*," "God has helped me." When taking leave of you, he will say: "*Nasayi akhulinde*," "May God protect you."

The wrestler before he attacks his opponent will take up a little soil, put it in his mouth, and spit it out towards the sun, because the sun, the symbol of God, fertilizes the earth and gives strength to the little seed. In like manner may God give him strength to throw his opponent.

I once asked a native why he spat towards the sun as this was to my mind a sign of disdain. He wondered at my ignorance and asked me:

"Does God not give life to us?" And, when I pressed him for an explanation, it came by his putting questions to me as is the usual way of a native in answering. "Has a dead man spittle? Is spittle not the sign of life in us? Who gives us life except God? If life comes from Him, have we not to acknowledge it? Therefore we spit towards the sun."

When a native is asked who God is, he will say that He is a spirit. "Was He created?" The native looks at the questioner and answers by saying: "Has God not created everything, even the sun? God is from all ages and the first man on earth [whose name they do not know] came from God." When asked about the first woman, they say: "We never heard of that." The reason seems to be that they never think much about a woman. When one asks a native how many children he has, he will give the number of his male children only. "And what about girls?" He will answer: "Oh, girls, I see; I do not know the number." And when one insists on knowing their number, he will ask those sitting nearby to help him in counting.

The first man had, of course, many women, otherwise he would be of no importance. The earth produced everything; God provided it all. Wherever they wanted food to grow, there they would put their hoes, and God would know their wish. Everything went on beautifully till the first man brought a new woman into the kraal. She took a look around and saw several of these hoes standing in the soil. She laughed at this idea and began to dig. After some time the husband came and saw that nothing but weeds had appeared. He suspected what had happened and called his women and told them to cultivate if they did not want to die of hunger.

Many children were born, in fact all people came from that first man. They had to cultivate; quarrels came amongst these women; and the happiness of the first man was far from what it previously had been. In the end even sickness came to the kraal, but death had not yet occurred. One day a visitor came in the shape of a chameleon. This strange visitor wanted beer. The pot was produced and slowly the chameleon moved his limbs and went deliberately into the beer. He came out after his bath and ordered the first man to drink. The natural abhorrence he had for the chameleon, made him refuse. Even touching a chameleon meant poison to him. On his refusal, the chameleon said to him: "From henceforth all you men will die." While he was saying this, a snake came along and the chameleon ordered the snake to take a sip of the beer. The snake obeyed without hesitation. Hence men die and the snake does not. For they think the snake is reborn every-time he sheds his skin.

The Bahanga fully believe in a life after death, which has no end. According to their opinion there are not separate places for the bad and the good. Happiness or misery is about the same as here on earth. A person's soul or shadow (*ekhyinekha*) likes to hover around where his bones are, although he can move about wherever he pleases. He is present in the kraal of his direct descendants where he partakes of their sacrificial meals. He sits at the stones of God on the pathway to the kraal to protect the inhabitants. He accompanies the owner of the kraal when the latter goes traveling. He is not confined to any particular locality. He has freedom of movement just as he had when living. But he returns to where his grave is, because there is his principal abode.

When a dead person is supposed to be bad towards his descendants and, according to native mind, tries to choke them in their sleep, they dig up the body, burn it, and throw the ashes in the river, in order to get him permanently away from the kraal. They do not mean that they destroy his soul, but by so scattering his ashes they force his soul to depart far away from their village, because the river runs only in one direction and can never return his remains.

Life after death is without end, not only for chiefs but for everybody, as they themselves say, and this opinion is also clearly expressed in the names they have for great-great-grandfathers, who are all mentioned in their sacrifices. Moreover, when, in cultivating, they strike a place which may have been a grave centuries ago, they offer a sacrifice to the spirit of the person who was once upon a time buried there, in order to appease him, although they are convinced that the occupant could not possibly have belonged to their tribe.

The opinion that natives think each man has a dual or a triple soul is, to my mind, not based on any valid grounds. This opinion seems based principally on the different places the soul after death may occupy. Natives do not say that this happens at the same moment, but the movements of the soul are thought to be very similar to those it was capable of when it was united to the body.

POSSESSION

In cases of possession (*omusebe*), the person, male or female, begins to shiver and to shout or yell. Shortly after he or she falls down in a swoon as if dead. The relatives immediately say that the person must have passed the grave of a Masai and that the spirit of this Masai has entered his or her body. There are some graves of Masai in this country, because the Masai seem to have inhabited this land before the Bantu tribes

came. The spirit of the Masai is called by them *musebe* or *sitani* (devil).

The relatives all gather around the body that lies on the ground and dance while at the same time clapping their hands, until the person comes to his senses. He speaks a language which they suspect to be the Masai language. At least the words are incomprehensible to them; therefore they think that there is no mistake about it, he or she has a devil. They will call in a *mulosi* (which word I shall explain later on), because the *musebe*-state or the possessed state always precedes the *mulosi*-state, and therefore the *mulosi* knows how to act.

The *mulosi* orders a calabash to be brought and to be put in a basket. These articles are put against the wall of the hut. Then he tells them to bring a sheep which has to be sacrificed to the devil. In the meantime he whispers strange words to the possessed and goes from time to time to the basket. He repeats his oracles, gets the calabash, puts in little pebbles, and solemnly declares that the devil is in the calabash. He then returns the vessel to the basket and declares the possessed to be a full-fledged *mulosi* or bewitcher with preternatural powers. He tells the newly inaugurated to look after his devil and whenever he eats to throw a morsel of the food into the basket.

BEWITCHERS

The bewitchers (*balosi*; sing., *mulosi*) are strange people. They act like mad men and are feared more than any wild animal. Nobody dares touch them, because it is the devil who acts through them. The bewitcher will leave his hut an hour or two after sunset, armed with a heavy stick. He hates moonlight, because he is a man of utter darkness. He first goes behind his hut and strikes fiercely at the grass till he has worked himself into a frenzy. He runs as fast as he can to the river and strikes the water till it has splashed all over his body. The spirit moves him. He has to do harm or to kill. He first fetches a burning coal and hides it in a small earthenware vessel. He might occasionally have to make it flare up with some dry grass when he is on his fiendish errands. He picks out his victim somewhere in a far-off kraal and follows the most deserted trails. Woe to the man who happens to be on his path. Noiselessly he stalks behind him, knocks him senseless with his stick, falls on him, and throttles him. On arrival at the distant kraal, he enters it, pushing the door of the hut without however entering the hut itself. This suffices, because the devil in him has done the work on one of the inhabitants who is fast asleep. The person bewitched feels

himself unwell the next morning. He is convinced that he has been bewitched and will slowly die off.

Stranger things may happen. The bewitcher stays at home, but the devil goes out of him and appears in the form of a man in the middle of the night at some kraal or other. The evil intended is twofold. The devil assumes the appearance of some innocent person who is quietly at home and fast asleep. The devil, having arrived at the hut where he has selected his victim, pushes the door and bewitches one of the occupants. He does not go away. He bangs the door till he awakens the sleepers. Those inside ask who he is and he gives the name of the innocent person, well known to these people. They ask him what he wants. No answer. The occupants of the hut get their spears and clubs and attack the disturber. But, strange to say, although they have badly wounded him, all of a sudden the disturber vanishes. While this scene is going on, the person whose name was given by this devil, suddenly awakens in his hut far off. He feels himself attacked, although he sees nobody; he shouts and awakens the others who, the natives say, see the blood rushing out of his wounds.

Some of these bewitchers keep in their huts strange pets which they regularly feed. A python or a black cobra comes in and does not do them any harm; they take food from the wizard, and if anybody should try to kill these pets, this person himself would be doomed to death. It was related to me how every night a crocodile came out of the river and visited the bewitcher in his hut. Others told me that a leopard was often heard there. Wonderful stories are related of bewitchers who ascended into the air and disappeared through the roof of somebody's hut in daylight.

Although feared very much, these bewitchers will often be consulted by people who intend to kill their enemy. The bewitcher will do it for them, or he may give the client some herbs and snake intestines wrapped up in leaves and the only thing the client has to do is to take the ominous parcel and deposit it at night in front of the hut of his enemy when he is asleep. In the morning the enemy, in passing out of his hut, steps on or over the parcel, and is doomed. The slow poison will finish him off. The doomed man, however, has noticed the parcel and knows the cause of his sickness. He will go to another bewitcher who for payment will make him immune.

It is no wonder that the native is daily in dread of bewitchers. A man may find himself lifted out of his bed and put outside his hut while he is fast asleep. Practically all illnesses are ascribed to this witchcraft.

Even during the day the bewitchers are not to be trusted. They might appear as ordinary men, but their evil eye may be on you, and bad blood or other strange material may pass from their body over to you. Sudden pains are felt below the chest and the safest thing to do is to call in a medicine man (*omundu owe misala*), who is not a bewitcher. He cuts where the pain is felt, applies his cupping horn, sucks the blood, and throws it out on a leaf. Sometimes he discovers some whitish stuff which he declares to be remains of tobacco ash and smoke. At other times he discovers something hard which may be hardened blood, and this is the stuff which is considered the most dangerous because it is the bad blood of the bewitcher. With other people the blood which he sucks out is absolutely pure red; therefore something else has to be done. He takes out of his medicine chest some mixture of leaves and butter, smears the fatty substance on the paining part of the body, begins to rub, and will produce something which is like cut-up hair of some animal or other. The patient need have no anxiety, for the cause of his illness has now been removed.

I was once on the road. It was pitch dark and a big strapping native was leading the way. He had volunteered to go with me to protect me against wild animals. The natives' eyesight is wonderfully sharp at night, and their sense of smell is so developed that they are aware of any animal which may be in the grass near by. He has no fear, because he relies on his speed and on his knobbed stick. All of a sudden he turned around, took hold of my arm and whispered: "*Mulosi*" (a bewitcher). The man was trembling with fear as he pointed somewhere in the high grass, where he had seen a light which I did not see, for the bewitcher had put it away in the small pot he was carrying. I told my man not to be afraid, because he was leading and, as he said, the bewitcher's attack was always made from behind. But my man kept looking round and forgot all about the wild animals from which he had come out to protect me. Often around the campfire I have listened to wonderful stories told by my natives about these bewitchers. Truly the native lives in a world of spirits.

CHARM DOCTORS

Besides the bewitchers and medicine men, there is another class of men or women, the charm doctor (*omundu owe mikalo*). They are famous all over the country for their charms. The charm doctor's hut is well provided with dried up sticks of all possible kinds of trees or shrubs. He is consulted in case of sickness. He listens with a serious

face while his client describes the symptoms. He then fetches one of his sticks, breaks off a piece, and hands it over, after having been paid for the consultation. This piece of wood has to be tied around the neck of the client. The charm doctor may also advise his client to bind it around his arm. At other times he fetches a bit of wood which the sick person has to chew.

The charm doctor's business is, however, principally concerned with prevention. Cattle disease breaks out in the country and he will advise his client to take this piece of wood, wrap it first in banana bark, and put the whole thing in a bundle of grass. A pole must be erected in the middle of the kraal to which this bundle has to be fixed. The charm will absorb all sickness which may be in the air.

Another person does not trust his enemy and he will be provided with a piece of wood which he has to lick from time to time and to carry round his neck. He will thus be quite immune from all bad intentions on the part of his enemy.

Another man has to appear in court, because he is accused of some crime or theft. The best thing for him to do is to see the charm doctor, who for this particular case selects a special kind of wood from among his pile, burns it to ashes, and fetches a bit of a hollow reed, into which he pours the ashes. He then advises the man to take this with him and, before entering the court, to shake some of these ashes on his hand and smear them on his temples and forehead. He has no reason to be afraid, because now the case cannot go against him. A more effective charm, for particularly bad cases, is the same ash poured into the hollow tooth of a wild pig. Even the worst bewitcher, knowing the man wears that tooth around his neck, will not dare to touch him.

ORACLE MEN

There is yet another type of people, the diviner (*omufumo*). Their power can be possessed by a woman as well as by a man. They derive their wisdom from the good spirits or even from God Himself. They are consulted in case of sickness. A man or a woman feels uneasy about a sick relative, and goes with food or a chicken to a diviner. The diviner does not need to know the symptoms, because assistance comes from above. The diviner fetches his calabash in which the pebbles are, this is shaken, and from the sound the oracle is made up, and a sacrifice is prescribed. No medicine is given. Often the oracle man will say that this sacrifice is required, but that the cure may not come about, as it will depend on the will of God, which He refuses to reveal at the moment.

POISON MEN

Some of the natives are supposed to know poisonous shrubs and their antidotes. A poison-man (*omufira*) is well paid, because there is a lot of enmity and jealousy and suspicion in this country. A person has quarreled with his neighbor and hatred enters his soul. He dares not to kill his neighbor openly but acts on the sly. Another is jealous of his friend or relative, because the latter has many cattle or children while he himself is poor; so he desires to poison him. He will go to the poison-man and tell him his woes.

Now the poison-man has two techniques. Out of the woody part of his shrubs, pounded and boiled down, he produces a poison which he advises his client to smear on the point of his walking stick. Armed with this, the client goes to the man whom he wants to kill, gets into a quarrel with him, and points at him with his stick. Immediately the poison passes from the stick into the man; although the stick has not touched him, he feels a severe headache and all his bones begin to ache. He knows that the poison has worked and his relatives will have recourse to the same poison-man or to another in the same trade. The poison-man has first to be paid before he starts administering to him. He brings his antidote, and lets him first drink of the pounded wood mixed with water; then he produces some fatty stuff which he rubs on the client's aching limbs. A third liquid is taken by the poison-man into his mouth and is spit into the face of the sick man. This ought to do for him; within a day or two he will be his own self again.

The poison-man has another method which he as a rule applies in cases of jealousy. The man who is to be harmed is a rich man, rich in cattle and in women and children. He must first be deprived of all these riches before death befalls him. Both the poison-man and the man with envy in his heart proceed in the middle of the night to the kraal of the rich man. Near the entrance and alongside the path which leads up to the kraal, the poison-man plants something which is very similar to a big wild onion. He plants it like an onion and covers it loosely with soil. After some time the poison onion will sprout, and then the evil begins. First, the children die one after another, then sickness attacks the women, and immediately the suspicion arises that there is foul play somewhere. The bereaved man goes to consult a poison-man who declares it to be a difficult case and demands a fee of two cows. He has first to search for the poison onion and to dig it up before starting operations. Then he orders a sheep to be killed because he wants all the dung which is still in the body of the animal. He mixes his antidote with the sheep dung,

makes small balls of the mixture, and throws these balls all over the place round and in the kraal. Then he prepares a liquid which all the inmates of the kraal have to drink and declares that they must have confidence, because no further harm will be done.

ORDEALS AND ORDEAL MEN

There are other individuals who know all about ordeals. Ordeals are called *ekhyilulu*. Something big, for instance, is missing, and some people are suspected of the theft. They are questioned, but all deny flatly. The man of the ordeals is called in, who pounds up his small dried-up sticks and prepares the draught. The accused persons have to stand in a row, while the others sit down and watch the liquor being administered. Silence reigns, while they eagerly wait for the moment when the real thief will begin to stagger and to fall like a drunken man. As soon as this happens they all abuse him and take him to the chief who fines the man two cows, one for the settlement and one for the man from whom the article of worth was stolen, because when he was accused of the theft he kept on denying it. The cow demanded for settlement will not be kept, because it is the fine following on the ordeal; therefore he will slaughter it and feast with his people.

Very often they call in the man of the ordeals in cases of false accusation. For instance, death has occurred in the kraal and the owner of the kraal accuses somebody of having bewitched the person who has died. The accusation is of course taken amiss and quarrel after quarrel is the result. At last both families are at loggerheads and they cannot meet without insulting one another. The only thing to do is to have an ordeal. The man of the ordeals calls all the relatives together, puts them apart, and has everybody drink his liquid, because this strong drink will very soon show who is at fault,—the family that is accusing or the family that is accused. One of the clan will be overpowered by the liquid and then the case is taken to the chief that he may impose the fine. If it is a case of false accusation, the fine will be three cows, of one which goes to the chief for the trouble he has taken.

Sometimes the dispute is settled between the parties themselves without the ordeal man. Both the parties agree to the skull-ordeal. The skull of a man who has been eaten by a leopard or of a stranger who has died in the high grass is fetched and brought to a place near the kraal. Everybody is invited to witness the performance. The two families are sitting on either side. First, the accused spits on the skull

and says that if he is guilty may death take him away. One of his relatives does the same. Then the accuser spits on it, saying, "May I die if I am accusing falsely." He is followed by one of his relatives, who does the same. Then the skull is fixed high up in a nearby tree. Nothing happens for a long time, but sickness seems to try to break out in the kraal of the innocent party. He goes to the tree, gets the skull, smashes it up with his hatchet, puts the fragments on a pile of wood, burns them down to ashes if possible, and throws the remnants into the river.

This kind of ordeal is very effective. The natives have intense dread of a skull, and when this ordeal is proposed, the guilty party prefers rather to admit his guilt than to have anything to do with the skull.

OMENS

There is no generic word in the native tongue for omens. These are as a rule called *amayoni amabi*, that is, bad birds.

The native lives in a world of spirits. He is constantly thinking of himself, and is full of fear because all around him try to do him harm. He feels only for his own clan, has no charity for others outside his own family, and dares not expect charity from others. The air seems to be full of evil and everywhere he expects to come across it. Therefore, his dead relatives, who are spirits themselves, have to protect him in his kraal. They know what evil is lurking about his abode; hence the stones dedicated to the deceased in the middle of the enclosure. Dangers are great and many when he is on a journey. The spirits of his ancestors have to accompany him on the road; hence the swept place near the stones dedicated to God. His forefathers have to sit there, and to lead his way when he leaves his kraal. These spirits do not talk to him with the speech of man. Only witchdoctors and oracle men are capable of conversing with them. But his ancestors will use a number of natural means to warn him when danger is near.

If a man leaves his place to visit some friend, and a wildcat crosses his path from left to right, he knows that this is a warning that something will happen to him that day on the road; he therefore returns and waits a day or two before he makes another attempt.

If a certain bird,—and there are many of these warning birds,—sings on the left side of the road, he knows again that his ancestors are advising him to return.

If the white-and-black crow perches on the top of his roof and returns time after time, in spite of being driven away, he is sure that sickness will enter that hut; therefore he had better offer a sacrifice to avoid the evil if possible.

If a barking fox barks too near your kraal, you had better drive him away, because sickness and death are sure to come.

If a hen begins to crow like a cock, they know that the devil is in her, and if the devil is in the hut, everybody is convinced that there will be trouble. This sinister hen has to be killed and you had better see a witch doctor.

If a hen all of a sudden begins to lay wind-eggs, your good spirits had better protect you, because a bad spirit has entered your fowl and bad spirits intend murder.

If a hen lays eggs more like pigeon eggs, you know that there is something radically wrong; this is the work of the devil, and you had better do away with this hen and offer a sacrifice, otherwise you will have to fetch the doctor.

Chickens go to bed at sunset, and if at the time of closing your door between two or three hours after sunset and dark, you hear your rooster crowing, heaven had better protect you, because danger is close at hand. Who else but the devil crows at this time of the night? You had better make a job of it now before you go to bed, and wring the neck of that devilish rooster. Then tomorrow morning the first thing for you to do is to see about a sacrifice; procrastinating might be detrimental to you or to your family.

Your baby begins to talk before you had expected the child to utter intelligible sounds. You know, as the father, that you are doomed unless the child itself dies, and perhaps your wife too is written on the list of the dead. You had better see about it before it is too late. This is a very bad thing indeed. Our forefathers knew only one effective remedy and that was to throw the precocious baby in the high grass and have done with it. But this cannot be done nowadays; therefore try to save your position by a sacrifice.

If your child gets its upper incisors before its time, you know this is very bad. Your wife has to die, but in all probability you as father will die first. Go and see the oracle man as soon as possible. But suppose you leave your kraal and you knock your left foot against a stone, what should you do then? If you go on you will surely be a dead man just the same; so it is better to wait for another day and try again. But who knows, by that time it may be too late.

BIRTH

No sacrifice or ceremony takes place on the day of birth. The child is given a name as soon as it is born. What happens, as regards the name, when the child keeps on crying has already been mentioned.

In case the last child has died, the mother, when bringing forth once more, is thoroughly convinced that this new one too is not going to live. She calls in an old woman, tells her that in the very early morning she will put the child on the road some distance from the kraal, and asks her to be in hiding nearby in order to pick up the baby and return it to her. The mother, however, makes sure that she can rely on her aged acquaintance.

In the early morning the mother leaves the kraal with her baby in her arms and puts it down in the place to which she has agreed to bring it. She returns to her hut and the old woman comes along and acts her part perfectly. She cries out: "A foundling, I had better take it to the kraal over yonder." She picks up the baby and goes to all the huts in that kraal except the mother's and tells the people that she has brought a foundling and asks them whether it is their child. Everybody denies having anything to do with the baby.

At last she comes to the hut of the actual mother, who also pretends not to know the baby, and insists she certainly is not the mother. The old woman then asks her whether she will adopt the baby and rear it. First the mother makes objections and says that children in her hut have all died, because she has a devil in her; if it were her child, this baby also would die. The old woman assures her that it will be all right, that this adopted child is not going to die because "its name is Makokha (rubbish) since I found it among rubbish on the road. The only thing for you to do is to get a mussel shell, a small bead and a small ring." These articles are brought and the old woman bores a little hole in the shell, fits the shell on the ring, and does the same with the bead. The ear of the child is then pierced and the ornament put on. Now every devil and witchdoctor will know that the child's name is Makokha (rubbish) and will not touch the child. Before the old woman departs she orders the mother to see that the hair of the baby is on no account allowed to be cut or shaven till a second child is born.

Everything goes on as usual; the mother is convinced that her baby will keep alive; the only thing for her to do is to treat the old woman well, whenever she pays a visit. After a year or two a new baby is born. The old woman is called in, and starts shaving the so-called foundling, who in the meantime has become extremely ugly on account of its long curly hair which has assumed more than one color. After the baby has been looked after, she shaves the mother and the father, who were not obliged to let their hair grow, but who are obliged to have shaven shining heads on this occasion.

TWINS

When twins (*amakhwana*) are born, this is considered as something very bad. The parents are not allowed to leave the kraal, nor even the hut, except for human necessities. If they do, the whole country round about will suffer for it; into whatsoever hut the mother passes, sickness and death will enter; the crops in the field along which the parents have walked will dry up; the well from which the mother dares to fetch water, will be poisoned. This enforced imprisonment has to last for two months.

After this period, all the women in the country who have been mothers of twins and a lot of other women enter the kraal for the twins' rite, *okhutsiya khu makwana*. They bring a sheep and beer, and all carry a lot of thorns. They start by blocking the entrance to the kraal with the thorns they have brought, and they then post themselves outside and wait for the parents of the twins to come and try to force their way out of the kraal. A sham fight now takes place, accompanied with a lot of shouting. This having lasted for some time, the women rush in, run up to the hut, take the door and run away with it, and throw it down somewhere.

The mother of the twins has meanwhile gone inside and decorated herself with a long creeper belonging to the Passifloraceae family, starting with her head and winding it all around her body. The father has the same decoration around his wrists, as have also the twins. One woman and one child selected for the occasion have to decorate themselves like the father of the twins. The two babies are put outside while the crowd has a look at them. Now the dance starts, one of the women accompanying the movements with a drum. The most filthy dance is executed and the songs are so bad that no heathen except the women dare to listen to it. Even the father of the twins, the only man there, has to get out of the way, in order not to hear the licentious songs that these women sing.

After the dance they kill the sheep. The dung which was still in the animal is now smeared on the chest of the mother and of the twins, pieces of the sheep's skin are bound around the wrists of both mother and children, and they as well as the father have to take a sip of the antidote made of a trifolium, very similar to the plant which the women visitors have brought. A male cooking pot (i.e., a cooking pot used only for beer) is carried to the house and they throw into it some of the sheep dung and pour the antidote in liquid form on the top of it together with some branches of a shrub belonging to the Caesalpinaceae family.

Everything is now ready for the procession. The mother of the twins has to visit all the houses in the neighborhood. Two women have to walk near her, one with the cooking-pot containing the above mentioned liquid, the other one with a basket. The basket is needed because every house she passes will give her a handful of grain. The mother of the twins sprinkles the mixture which is in the cooking pot not only on the huts but also on the fields under cultivation, so that death and failure of crop, which threatened all of them on account of the misfortune of bringing forth twins, might be taken away through the sprinkling of this antidote. She might have to go out also on the days following to finish the kraals, because all within a radius of ten miles are infected.

After that she will have to see to her own hut. She starts by sweeping the place, which has become very dirty as a result of her two months' enclosure. The twins were never allowed to be taken out; therefore all their excrement is still there. All this is swept together and put in a cooking pot, because none of it may be swept outside. The mother carries the pot to the river and looks for a place where the river is deep enough and sinks the pot. People will never try to wade through at this place on account of the depth. If anybody has the misfortune to come in contact with the contents of the pot, he is sure to get a skin disease similar to burns and scalds, and his whole skin will blister and come off.

MARRIAGE

Marriage is called *okhutekherana*, that is, "to boil for one another." When a father wants a wife for his son, he goes to talk to a man of his own tribe and sees whether he is willing to part with his daughter, to which as a rule the man agrees, unless the mother of the girl makes objection to the clan of her future son-in-law. The father of the girl prefers to discuss matters over a pot of beer, therefore the boy's father will have to come back, when some beer has been brewed. In the meantime the young couple has very little knowledge of the intentions of their respective fathers, unless their brothers have told them something about it; but in any case the young people are not consulted in the matter.

Marrying among the pagan Bahanga has nothing to do with love. The boy wants a wife to cultivate and cook for him; the only thing he is concerned about is whether he is able to manage his future wife. And besides, when it comes to a push, he can always repudiate his wife, if she does not satisfy him. Moreover, he is not bound to have one wife

only; later on he will add to the number, if cows are available. The main idea of stocking cattle is to be able to buy more women. It is the dream of the young man in his earlier days, his ideal in life, to have as many women as possible. In this way he will be considered an influential man in the country.

When the two fathers have agreed upon the dowry, (to pay the dowry, is, *okhukhua omukhana*) the first thing to do is to bring a young bull and a heifer to the girl's father. These two animals are not counted as a real part of the dowry, because the bull and the heifer are symbolic of the new couple. As a rule the dowry consists of eight cows,—three goats being considered as equivalent to one cow.

After the dowry or a considerable part of it has been paid, the father will call his daughter and tell her that he intends to have her married: "Look at the other girls, who have already been disposed of." The girl is not willing, because she loses her freedom, and has as a rule to be forced. When she sees that opposition is useless, she calls her girl comrades from round about. The father prepares a feast for them. For this feast there is plenty of food, a goat is killed, and the merriment is great. Her uncle takes the girl first to the sacrificial stones dedicated to the ancestors. He then produces a female quail, pierces the beak of the live bird, puts a string through it, and ties it to the neck of the girl. A spear is brought and given to her to carry. After that she is polished with butter, as is also one of the bridesmaids.

They all now go to the kraal of the father of the bridegroom. One of the party carries on her head a pot with beer, which is decorated around the neck with a creeper belonging to the Vitaceae family. All along the way the girls sing, till they reach the entrance to the kraal. They wait outside until her parents-in-law met her with a present of ten shillings. After that the procession enters and halts again in the middle of the kraal, because another present of four or five shillings has to be given. Now she turns towards the hut of the bridegroom's father. Before she sits down on the cowhide spread out for her, another four shillings are handed over to her. She is still in possession of her spear, which is handed over by her only on receipt of these four shillings. A knife is brought and the quail is cut in two and taken off, except for the beak which remains attached to the string around her neck.

The ceremonies for the day are over, and, as they arrived late in the afternoon about two hours before sunset, darkness soon sets in and she and all her girl friends turn towards the boys' hut for the night. In each kraal there is a hut set apart for the boys, who do not sleep in the huts of their mothers. These huts are of bad repute.

The girls will sing the whole night long till in the morning when the parents-in-law call for the girl to stand near the sacrificial stones. A goat is sacrificed. It is killed by banging the head on the ground. The animal is then skinned, a broad strip of the hide is cut off, a hole is made near the middle, and the strip is put over the bride by way of a mantlet. The dung of the goat is smeared on her chest and her father-in-law says to her: "If you refuse to marry my son and go to somebody else, this mantlet will always stand against you and you will make a mess of your life." And the girl answers: "The same will happen to your son, if he repudiates me."

Now all the invited guests go home, but the bride and one of her bridesmaids stay behind. After two or three days, the father of the bride prepares the marriage feast, taking care that there will be enough food and beer. There will also be a goat ready for the occasion. He sends word to his son-in-law that everything is ready and to come to the feast in his kraal. The young man calls all his friends together and all the girls of his neighborhood. The procession is not allowed to enter the kraal. Therefore they make a halt a good way outside, because they will have to wait till there has been brought the pot with beer in which is the antidote (*trifolium* pounded up). Of this they drink before they enter the enclosure.

The bride and bridegroom are then both brought to the hut of the bride's mother, where two people are holding the goat crosswise in front of the entrance. Bride and bridegroom have to jump over the animal (*okhusira imbusi*) before they get in, and, once in, they have to jump back, and then once more return to the hut in the same way. The goat is taken away and the young couple once more leave the hut. They stand in the entrance facing the hut and somebody takes them by the shoulders pushes them inside and drags them back, in order to push them in a second time.

Now everybody enters and sits down to the food and drink prepared. They stay at it and sing songs the whole night long till the break of dawn. The feast is not yet over; the father of the bride kills a cow in the morning and baskets of food are issued from all the huts, because it is the feast specially prepared for all who have come from afar and everywhere.

Then everybody goes, except the newly married couple, with four bridesmaids who remain as guests for two days. The two days over, all leave, but the bridegroom has to leave his wife for three more days with her parents. Then she will return to him with food and beer prepared

in the kraal of her father. The bridegroom has to see to it that a cow is waiting, because he has to prepare the meat. This cow is called "the stripped cow" (*ingombe yarando*) of the girl, because after killing the animal, big lumps of meat are cut off from all sides, and these lumps of meat are cut into long strips. While this cutting is going on, the bride, together with the girls, has a meal of the cooked food she brought along. Some of the strips of meat are sent in the meantime to her parents, but other strips are kept, because now the bride has to eat of this meat quite by herself in the hut of her mother-in-law.

The feasting being over she will do her ordinary duties as housewife for about five to six months and then is called by her mother to come get a full outfit: one small cooking-pot for cooking meat and vegetables, one small basket for serving food, one small earthenware saucer for bringing up the meat and sauce, one big basket, one handle without the iron hoe, one pad for carrying the waterpot, one flat basket for winnowing grain, and one female cooking pot (i.e. the pot in which the daily cooking is done). The father of the bride has to give his share. He kills a cow and has beer brewed, and all is taken to his son-in-law. One of his sons accompanies him because he has to help his father to search for three cooking stones and to bring them to the hut of the married daughter. The girl's father arranges the stones with his own hands so that the cooking pot can safely rest on them, and then he orders his daughter to cook.

All the unmarried boys and girls are now called in to watch a strange performance. The food is now ready for the young husband to eat; this is the first official meal prepared by his wife. He holds his hands out and she pours water on them to wash them. Some water will remain in the split hollowed-out calabash. All of a sudden she throws it in his face, and one of her brothers, the one who helped his father bring the cooking stones, takes up a stick, and begins to strike his brother-in-law with it, with the result that the unfortunate bridegroom runs out of the hut while all the people laugh at him. This is a symbolical representation of what might happen later on, namely, that he cannot do with his wife whatsoever he likes, and, if he abuses her badly, a fine will be put on him. Therefore, on this occasion he has to make his wife a present of a heifer. After that the feast goes on, which is considered the grand finale.

TOTEMS AND TABOOS

The word totem is called *musiro*, "the thing abstained from." As a tribe, the Bahanga all abstain from the Isaac's antelope (*Boöercus*

eurycerus), while the Bahanga of the Marama district consider the eland as their totem. In addition, each clan in the tribe has its own special totem. These clan totems are so numerous that it would be impossible for me to enumerate them all. They seem to have been chosen indiscriminately, and range from the hippopotamus to the mole-rat, and from the largest bird to the smallest.

Those of the same totem may and do marry. The natives do not consider themselves as descended from their totem. In fact, they emphatically deny such descent. This is corroborated by the nature of some of the totems, as, for example, the kidneys of a cow. There is a taboo on eating the totem, for if they eat their totem ulcers will break out all over their body.

All children, boys and girls, acquire their totem from their father. Totemic descent is distinctly in the paternal line. A woman who marries will still retain her own totem, the totem of her father. She will however refrain from eating the totem of her husband, because if she boils it in the pot in which she boils the food for her husband and children who are or may be of another totem they may be contaminated. If she leaves the kraal, however, and eats somewhere else, she does not hesitate for a moment to eat her husband's totem.

All women have to abstain from chickens, guinea fowl, eggs, sheep, a goat when it is giving suck, and the mudfish, called *lepidosiren*. These things are abstained from by them in addition to their totem proper. Members of the female sex while still young will eat these things, but refrain from them after they grow up. Possibly some of these food taboos are merely preventive measures on the part of the husband to safeguard his chickens and sheep during his absence; for nothing would be easier for a woman than eating these things and on her husband's return telling him that a wildcat or a leopard had done away with them. At any rate, these observances cannot be called totemic in the proper sense of the word. They are more of the nature of secular customs or fashions, because the women might eat these things on the sly, but are merely ashamed of being caught.

There are many parallel taboos for the men. For instance, a son may not sit on his father's chair or wear his father's armlet or cowry hat, while his father is still alive. A married son may not open the door of his mother's house while her husband is still living with her; he may not sit near the fireplace in his mother's house as long as she still cooks for his father; he may not touch his mother's storehut while his father is still living; he may not enter the bananery of his uncle.

MUTILATIONS AND ADORNMENTS

A child, when it reaches the age of about ten, has four of his or her lower incisors removed. All boys and girls have pierced ears. An earring of brass is worn by the girls only, or a button-like ornament, which last is the most common. The custom of wearing copper rings around their legs seems to have died out. They often wear bracelets of grass and necklaces of small seeds strung together.

Girls and women make two rows of about twenty-five incisions on the forehead. These incisions are made with a knife, and heal up, leaving as a rule a slight swelling in the skin. This ornamentation is universal; but many have also three short rows of similar incisions on the arm near the shoulder, others have incisions on their stomachs, and others have the incisions even on their backs.

Young people make three marks on their cheeks, thus: $\backslash /$. Each stroke is one inch and a quarter in length. Three blades of grass, called *isambirire*, are put with some saliva on their cheeks and covered with cobwebs. The grass burns off the skin, on which when healed a black mark is left. These marks resemble in appearance the symbol of fertility of the old Sabaeans.

CIRCUMCISION

Circumcision (*okhukhyebwa*) is now universal, but the custom is of recent introduction, although the Bahanga say that the chiefs with their courtiers had this custom from time immemorial. The fact that none of the Bahanga themselves knows how to perform the act is in itself evidence that the introduction is recent. The Bahanga always fetch people from Kakalelwa, where the Abarebe live, to circumcise their boys.

Circumcision takes place every two or three years. No fixed age is given as essential. It may be any age between fifteen and twenty-five years. When the time has come, the elders ask the chief to fix a date. As soon as the day is fixed by the chief, the elders lock up the candidates in their huts, until the latter are fetched to go to the swamp, where they smear their bodies all over with white clay. The candidates return singing songs which mention the circumcision, till they arrive at the place where the circumcision is to take place. They are all closed up in a hut and taken out one by one to be circumcised. While they are bleeding and walking with spread legs and bent backs, they are taken to temporary huts, called *irumbi*. For each hut a girl and a boy are ap-

pointed to look after the circumcised boys. The boy has to see to the firewood and the girl has to provide banana leaves to sleep on. These two however do not have to sleep in the huts with the circumcised. The relatives provide food for the circumcised during the four or five months they have to stay in the huts.

As soon as the chief declares the time up, these temporary huts are burned. But the circumcised boys are not yet allowed to enter the kraal. They have to sleep in the open. But in the early morning they approach the kraal, carry out a dance, and enter. As soon as they are inside, they have to wash themselves and to have their heads shaven. Beer is prepared for them to make them merry, and their friends bring them presents in the shape of chickens and money.

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